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THE POOR IN GREAT TOWNS

AND

IMMIGRATION FROM COUNTRY DISTRICTS.

SPEECH BY

Arthur B. D. Acland, M.P.,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

—APRIL 2nd, 1889.—

Reprinted from the Rotherham "Advertiser," with
some Supplementary Notes.

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On Tuesday, in the House of Commons, Mr Broadhurst moved, "That in the opinion of this House the chronic poverty of great numbers of the people living in the larger cities and towns of Great Britain is a danger to the well-being of the State, and calls for the instant attention of the Government to remedy with measures by which the depopulation of the agricultural centres may be checked, and the congestion of the great centres of population relieved."

The motion was seconded by Mr R. T. Reid.

Mr Seton-Karr moved, as an amendment, that "the House fully recognised the danger to the well-being of the State caused by the chronic poverty and overcrowding of great numbers of the people living in London and the larger cities and towns of Great Britain, and was of opinion that in the consideration and development by the Government of some well-devised scheme of State colonisation an effective and practical remedy for this state of things could be found, whereby an outlet for our unemployed agricultural class now migrating annually to our large cities and towns, and increasing the want and poverty there, would be provided, the large tracts of fertile and unoccupied lands in our colonies would be profitably utilised, and the evils arising from over-population and agricultural depression at home would be relieved."

The amendment was seconded by Mr Gedge.

Speaking on the subject, Mr A. H. D. ACLAND (Rotherham), said:—I shall not refer in detail to the speeches of the two members who have just spoken on the subject of colonisation, because in the limited time which I can occupy it will be better to deal with that part of the subject with which I am more fully acquainted.

The one chief question now raised, is that of the relation between town and country in this matter, and the influence upon the great towns of the migration into them of country people. Now there are some very interesting facts and figures on this subject in an article by Mr Llewellyn Smith which

is about to be published as part of a book on East London life and work, edited by Mr Charles Booth, (1) who has done such invaluable work in making inquiries into the condition of the poor in London. It appears from the census returns of 1881, that out of one hundred people in London 37 were born out of London, whereas in the rest of England and Wales only 28 per cent. were born out of their own county. Again, we find that in 1881 there were 1,200,000 persons living in London who were born outside, whereas there were only 600,000 living outside London who had been born in London. It is necessary in all these matters to remember the ebb as well as the flow and the existence of a back current from London for which no allowance is generally made (2). An analysis of the census returns of 1871 and 1881 shows that in ten years the surplus population of London over and above the natural increase from births and deaths was only 100,000, or an increase at the rate of 10,000 a year due to the migration from outside (3). This is for London as a whole, but for East London and Hackney on exactly the same calculation as the above, we find that there is a deficiency in comparison with the natural excess of births and deaths that we should have expected, of 7000 persons. That would imply that these districts were already saturated, and the increase due to the immigration from the country was to be found rather in places like West Ham and other newer districts, which have grown rapidly from villages into towns.

In the next place we may consider the immigration from agricultural villages. Well, in some counties like Huntingdon this has been considerable. (4) The decrease of the population in eleven typical agricultural counties between 1851 and 1881 was only, however, 1 per cent. (5), and therefore what some people would call "depopulation," has not been so much as was commonly supposed. However, as the towns are rapidly increasing in numbers in proportion to the country, there is no doubt a great influx going on from the villages into populous districts, and it appears, that so far as men are concerned, this is largely of men over the age of twenty.

Now the important question must be asked what is the effect upon towns of this influx from the agricultural districts? It has been sometimes supposed that people from the villages come into the town and at once sink into a lower stratum of labour, and as the words of the Amendment before the House imply, "increase the want and poverty there." Now I believe that speaking broadly that idea may be directly challenged and contradicted. It can be directly proved that the large proportion of country people who are often the pick of the agri-

cultural villages pass into the higher ranks of labour in towns and form for the time some of the best and strongest workmen to be found at any rate in London. It is important to consider this whole question from the point of view of its effects upon the quality and capacity of our working people. I believe there can be no doubt that if London were "walled out," so to speak, from the immigration of country labourers the condition of its working population would deteriorate in a very grave and serious way. Now Mr Ogle has said, in connection with this point that as the death rate is always far higher in towns and manufacturing districts than in the rural districts or than in the country at large the combined effect of this constantly higher mortality in the towns and of the constant immigration into them of the pick of the rural population, must clearly be a gradual deterioration of the whole, inasmuch as the more energetic and vigorous members of the community are consumed more rapidly than the rest of the population. The system, he says, is one that leads to the survival of the unfittest (6). If this be true the matter is one demanding serious attention whether we look at town or country. In London it can be clearly shown by statistics, supplemented by conjecture approaching almost to certainty, that whether we take the criminals or those who are in the workhouse, or the poor labourers who work at the docks, the proportion of London-born people among them, or people who have been in London for many years, is much higher than the average. On the other hand, if we take the police, or some of the building trades, or those who work at the railways, or at the heavier work for contractors it will be found that the country born people are at a great advantage (7). It is quite clear, as Mr Llewellyn Smith points out, that the cry of "London for the Londoner" would be fatal to the best work in London and that the migration or rather the constant circulation which is going on may be bad for the country districts in some degree but is essential to the vitality of the towns. In the towns unfortunately there is a constant drifting downwards towards a deposit of poverty and feebleness at the bottom, and the country people are constantly filling up the gaps. Mr Charles Booth has made a most valuable inquiry into the character and composition of the population of East London (8). His conclusions may be briefly stated thus:—There are in the middle, so to speak, about 40 per cent., who are working men with regular standard earnings, and reasonably well off for working men. Above these there are 25 per cent. comprising the higher class of labour, the lower middle class and the upper middle class. Below the 40 per cent., there are 35

per cent. of poor and very poor people, ranging from the scale of poverty down to the greatest want and distress. Now, with the 40 per cent. and the 25 per cent. above them, we are not to-day concerned, but with the 35 per cent. we are very much concerned in the present discussion. Mr Booth divides his 35 per cent. into, first, the lowest class, criminal and quasi-criminal, who are only about 2 per cent. Above them come those who get casual earnings, shiftless and wretched people, often sadly unfitted for work, and by nature preferring to live in idleness rather than work. This is specially the class which forms the deposit which is constantly dragging others down in various ways, and which, if we could gradually lessen, and if we could get hold of their children, and draw them upwards, we should be doing the best work possible for all concerned (9). This class is about 11 per cent. Above them come those who earn intermittent earnings, and who are the quickest to suffer from any depression in trade. These are also mainly very poor, they form about 9 per cent. Above them come those who get regular earnings but these earnings very small; they are a patient and often suffering people, whose children we ought to lift to the class above whenever we can by technical education, or in any other way (10). There are about 13 per cent. and with the others they complete the 35 per cent. of poor or very poor. In East London there are least 100,000, or say one third of the 35 per cent., who are constantly verging on want and the deepest distress, or if you take London as a whole, there are probably at least 300,000 of this poorest class of all. It is these people who form the great problem, and it is sad to think, though no doubt some few of them are shiftless people from the villages, that the bulk of them have suffered largely from the very fact that they have been born and bred in the town. Country people, however poor may have been their food, have had the great advantage of living in the fresh air, which makes them stronger, muscularly and bodily, so that they compete at an enormous advantage with the town labourer. The lowest class, no doubt, of our towns has drifted down from the classes above to this lamentable condition, and to some extent our modern inventions and the rapid development of industry, on which we pride ourselves, has tended to add to that class which goes drifting downwards. General Walker, the American economist, says that if we consider the population of the more squalid section of any city we can only conclude that contrary to the assumption of the economists, the more miserable men are, the less and not the more likely they are to seek and find a better place in society and industry. Their poverty, their ignorance, their superstitious fancies, and, perhaps more

than all, the apathy that comes with a broken spirit bind them to the place of their fate. It is a serious thing when a man, through no fault of his own, is thrown out of employment, and then when the industrial opportunity comes round again it does not find the same man that it left (11).

Well now, by what means can we help to improve this state of things? It is but little after all, that the House of Commons can do, and our society is so complex, and its evils are so difficult to deal with, that I always suspect the man who has a special cure of his own to propound of not having studied these questions very deeply. (Hear, hear.) But I do think that in our country districts much more may be done than is yet done to retain some of these men, all of whom we do not want to go into the towns, and to improve the quality of some of those who stay. With regard to the reform of the land system I am glad to hear my friend the honourable and learned member for Dumfries say it is so simple a matter. Some years ago, the present Premier, speaking of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer said that Mr Goschen wished to make the transfer of land as easy as the transfer of Consols, which showed that Mr Goschen knew more about consols than he knew about the land. (A laugh). Even, however, if we have free land, we shall not have got to the bottom of this question. I hope more will be done in the villages to encourage people to live there. (Cheers.) There is a committee now sitting on the question of small holdings. Any artificial attempt to create them will be an attempt not very likely to succeed—(hear, hear)—but if that same committee will encourage tenants to purchase where it is desirable to purchase, and will see what can be done to help a few independent artisans and labourers living in the villages to buy cottages for themselves if opportunity offer, and to get land for common or public purposes where needed, I think they will be doing a better thing. (Hear, hear.) As to land purchase, some people think no farmers want to purchase; that may be true of very many, but let honourable members go to Wales and see if there are not farmers there who would gladly purchase if they had the opportunities of the Irish Land Purchase Act. With reference to villages and village life, having had considerable practical experience myself in the management of a large estate, I can assert that many of our model villages, though they bear evidence of the philanthropy and goodwill of many of our landlords, are by no means the villages which are producing the vigour and the force and the independence in our country people that are wanted—(hear, hear)—and I do not hesitate to say that for myself, I prefer to the model village the open village which is not under the kindly

and benevolent despotism of one big man (12). The fact is that say what we will, our English system is largely founded upon what may be called a charitable basis. Landlords are often willing to find capital for farmers in the form of buildings and the like, at an extremely low rate of interest, because of the social advantages which land offers. And as to cottages, especially in the South of England, they often build cottages on which the rate of interest, paid in rent, is extremely small, and it would be far better if labourers paid a proper rent for their cottages, and had proportionately higher wages. There may be some economical advantages in our present land system, but from a social point of view, and in view of the question whether we are breeding the most independent and strongest-fibred men in the villages, there is a very different side to this matter. This is why some of us were so anxious last year to get reformed vestries in our country parishes, that the people may in open council discuss and resolve upon their needs. When they desire land for cottages, clubs, chapels, co-operative societies, and the like, and there is a clear public need, they ought to be able to obtain it (13).

I return now for a moment to the poor in the industrial and town districts, and I ask what remedies are proposed for them. I know that the member for Lanarkshire and his Socialist friends believe that we ought to advance State loans to groups of poor workmen like the chainmakers of Cradley, that they may conduct industries of their own with this money. On that matter I think we had much better do all we can to help these poor people by private enterprise before we attempt to run the risk of failure by the advancement of State money. (Mr Cunninghame Graham: "Why?") The honourable member asks "Why?" I will tell him why. State-aided workshops have never yet succeeded anywhere: they were a great failure in France in 1848 (14). It is no use inviting all these poor chainmakers at Cradley, with their little experience in business, to form a local industrial board to manage their own industry, and then to fancy that they are going to succeed. We must begin these things on a small scale. Some of my co-operative working men friends are joined with me in making an effort in that direction, and I believe that honourable members in the House and others will find the £2000 of share capital which we want for starting a co-operative factory into which we may draw some of the chainmakers from their wretched domestic workshops. If such a factory can succeed on good business lines, I have no fear that more money will not be forthcoming. As to the question of hours of labour, I am much in sympathy with the honourable member for Lanark, but I think an inquiry should be made, which

the Government can make, into what the great mass of actively employed working men think on this subject. (Hear, hear.) It is of no use that Trade Union delegates should benevolently hold up their hands in support of the eight-hour resolution at the Trade Union Congress. We want to know whether many of the trades which they represent are willing and anxious to give up overtime? In some trades eight hours is not far from the rule already. How far are working men ready to accept eight hours all round? (15) But the direction in which I think the Socialists are doing the most good is in helping to form a healthy public opinion against bad employers, and against all who desire to keep the workman down, and who act so as to degrade the labourer instead of lifting him up.

We have received a terrible legacy from the past, caused partly by bad laws, partly by the reckless haste of men to get rich, partly by irregular employment, which is a terrible evil, partly by ill-considered charity, which people do not consider to be an insult, as it often is to those to whom it is offered, and which too often helps them in their downward career instead of lifting them up (16). With all these difficulties we need the influence of public opinion in the right direction in every way we can, and we can do a good deal in this way in the House of Commons. We must avoid above all meddling with and hindering those who, whether industrially or socially, are lifting people upwards or preventing them from sliding downwards. But there are certain things which we can do. Take the question of drink: who can doubt that if we take the lowest class of poor of whom I have spoken the constant temptations afforded to them by our present drinking system have largely helped them in their downward course, and much increased the number of those who go to the bottom? It will be one of the gravest charges which can be made against this Government if they come to the end of their time without attempting to grapple with this problem. You had a chance last year. (Ministerial cheers.) Yes, I know, but if you thought your scheme of compensation was right, and that the people thought it right, why didn't you carry it through as you had the power to do? No; you found out that the country would not have it, and didn't think it right, and then you dropped it. (Cheers.) And now I fear we are losing most valuable years during which this question of compensation, which lies at the root of the difficulty might be running itself out on the plan of six or seven years' notice to publicans, for though I do not believe in legal right to compensation, we probably as in many other such matters, shall end with a compromise, and in that case the years now running might have been of the utmost value to us (17). The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech at Edinburgh, in

1885 at the time when we were really debating some of those vital questions, while he was speaking of the way in which our fearful roads of pauperism were increased, said "I believe if Sir Wulfrid Lawson's movement were capable of being carried to the end it would do more to empty the workhouses than all the schemes of Mr Jesse Colliaps." (Laughter.) He said that we must look upon temperance and education as our great sources of help in these matters, and why does not the Government now do something real for education? You have brought in a code which does almost nothing for the curriculum or to encourage evening schools, where we might grapple with some of these difficulties (18). You are doing nothing for secondary education, though there are large districts in country and town where there is no possibility of educating under public supervision the men who are to lead and guide our industry and commerce in the future (19). And as for technical education you have mentioned it twice in the Queen's Speech, and this year you have dropped it altogether. And yet the one thing we are certain of is this, that if we can increase the knowledge and intelligence of our working men and their leaders, we shall increase the wealth of the country, and thereby benefit the whole nation. We shall give men more forethought, self-respect, and promptitude, and improve that fibre and capacity which are in danger of serious deterioration. Now, Sir, if the Government had really cared about education they would have given it a better position in the ministry or in the cabinet. (Hear hear.) And then you might do much more for labour statistics. There is an immense deal of information wanted, and you leave Mr Burnett alone with a couple of clerks at the Board of Trade, when there is good work to be done by ten times as many people (20).

We, at any rate, who are among the more fortunate, have a great responsibility upon us in that we enjoy on every side the full share of the benefits of modern industrial development. The very poor, on the other hand, have little of this. Their shilling does not command such a good shillingsworth as ours in the market. They are constantly the victims of their ignorance. Some from want of knowledge, or from weakness, are constantly brought into temptations which never affect us. It is our bounden duty to lessen their ignorance, and to do what we can to encourage them and give them hope, and the sooner we employ ourselves practically and tangibly in doing promptly what we clearly can do to diminish the temptations which surround the poor, and to increase their knowledge, the better for us all. (Cheers.)

Notes.

[I have added a few notes for the use of some of my friends at Rotherham who may not have access to such books as those of Mr. Charles Booth or General Walker, to which I have referred above, and with a view of explaining a few points on which it was necessary to speak with brevity in the House of Commons. —A. H. D. A.]



—NOTES.—

(1.) Labour and Life of the People. Vol. I. East London. Williams and Norgate, 1889. (10/6.) The volume is divided into three parts. (1.) "The Classes," an investigation into the poverty and the social grades of the population of East London and Hackney, by Mr. Charles Booth. (2.) "The Trades," by various contributors; *The Docks and Tailoring*, by Miss Beatrice Potter; *Bootmaking*, by Mr. Schloss; *Furniture Trade*, by Mr. Ernest Aves; *Silk Manufacture*, by Mr. Argyle; *Tobacco Trade*, by Mr. Fox; *Woman's Work*, by Miss Collett. (3.) "Special Subjects:" *Sweating*, by Mr. Booth; *Influx of Population*, by Mr. Llewellyn Smith; *The Jewish Community*, by Miss Potter. The volume is illustrated by five coloured maps, one being a large size descriptive map of East London poverty, showing the character of every street in six shades of colour. The next volume will deal on a similar plan with other parts of London, and more especially with Pauperism and Crime.

(2.) On this point I may quote Mr. Smith's Chapter in "*Labour and Life of the People (East London)*."—Pp. 505.--"There were in 1881, nearly double as many natives of other parts of England and Wales resident in living in other parts of England and Wales. In other words (leaving out London, as natives of London for the moment the question of foreign immigration and emigration), London was at that time, recruited from England and Wales to the extent of 579,371 persons, the excess of inflow over outflow."

Pp. 519 & 20.—"There is a continual stream of population from the centre to the circumference which does not figure directly in the Census returns because it proceeds no further than the outlying districts within the metropolitan area. Thus the congested districts of Whitechapel and St. George's-in-the-East act as feeders to Poplar, which is also largely recruited by immigration from the outside."

P. 520.—"The density of the overcrowded districts nearer the centre is not increasing, but gradually falling off, according to the Census returns."

P. 554.—“Influx cannot be completely studied apart from efflux. Population flows out of, as well as into, the great cities, so that the movement looked at nationally, is a circulation which is not only healthy in itself, but essential to national health. It may be too much to say that this circulation is *caused* by the deteriorating influence of city life, but the connection between the two is very close. To complain that men living in towns degenerate physically is almost like complaining that blood loses its oxygen in passing through our veins. The attraction into London is not all for evil. Movements of population—interchange between town and country, or between centre and extremities—are of the very essence of civilisation, the word implies as much; and of these movements that between London and the provinces is the most notable example. Much of the efflux may go no further than the suburbs, but even so, the conditions of life for those who leave are greatly changed, and the coming and going between London and its suburbs is itself a valuable form of circulation.”
—(C. BOOTH.)

- (3.) Ibid. P. 505.—“The population of London in 1871 was 3,254,260. The excess of births over deaths in London in the next ten years was 454,475. Thus the population should in 1881 have been 3,708,735. It actually was 3,816,488, showing an unaccounted-for excess of 107,753, which is the nett direct result of the process of recruiting from the country and abroad during ten years. Thus London gains *directly* at the rate of rather more than 10,000 a year from its contact with other places, a number which would be largely increased if we included in London such rapidly growing districts as West Ham, in Essex. There is also probably a considerable *indirect* gain.”

P. 506.—“There has been of late years little, if any, influx into East London, in the sense of an excessive growth directly traceable to immigration. In fact, the figures of the last census seem to point to an opposite change. The following table shows the discrepancy between the actual growth of population of East London and Hackney and the “natural growth,” as defined before :—

East London and Hackney (including Stoke Newington).

Population, 1871	765,062
„ 1881, calculated by excess of births over deaths	886,128
Actual Population, 1881	879,200
Deficiency	6,928

This seems to show an actual loss by contact with the country and other parts of London, which may be a surprise to many, though scarcely perhaps to those who are aware of the extent of the overflow from the congested districts in the centre towards the newer suburban districts such as West Ham.”

- (4.) See Paper by Dr. Ogle on "The Alleged Depopulation of the Rural Districts," read before the Royal Statistical Society in March, 1889.
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- (5.) This shows a great *relative* decline, as compared with the growth of the towns, but the *absolute* decline is but trifling.
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- (6.) Dr. Ogle says :—"In towns and manufacturing districts the death-rate is always far higher than in the rural districts, or than in the country at large ; and the combined effect of this constantly higher mortality in the towns, and of the constant immigration into them of the pick of the rural population, must clearly be a gradual deterioration of the whole, inasmuch as the more energetic and vigorous members of the community are consumed more rapidly than the rest of the population. The system is one that leads to the survival of the unfittest."
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- (7.) Two sections of the Chapter on Influx of Population above alluded to, are devoted to the distribution of immigrants among various *Classes* (pp. 524-530), and among *Trades and Employments* (pp. 530-542). There it is shown that there is a relative excess of Londoners by birth among criminals (p. 525), paupers (pp. 526-7), applicants for relief from the Charity Organisation Society (pp. 527-8), recruits who enlist in London (pp. 528-9), and dock labourers (pp. 530-538), and an excess of country men among the police (pp. 529-30), the building trades (p. 539), carriers, drivers, and railway servants (p. 541), and among labourers where specially heavy work is required (p. 542, &c.).

The number of cases analysed is sometimes small, but the argument seems on the whole conclusive.

- (8.) The following are the exact numbers, according to Mr. Booth's calculation, belonging to the various classes in East London :—

A. (Vicious—semi-criminal)	...	...	...	9,394
B. (Casual earnings—very poor)	...	...	...	84,007
C. (Intermittent earnings) ..	...	...	...	63,769
D. (Small regular earnings)	...	...	...	112,149
E. (Regular standard earnings—above the line of poverty)	313,999			
F. (Higher class labour)	80,765
G. (Lower middle class)	32,205
H. (Upper middle class)	12,387
				<hr/>
Total				708,675
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This table does not include Hackney.

- (9.) Mr. Booth says: "Here in class B we have the crux of the social problem. Every other class can take care of itself, or could do so if class B were out of the way. These unfortunate people form a sort of quagmire underlying the social structure, and to remove this quagmire must be our principal aim." P. 596
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- (10.) See leaflets of the National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education. (14 Dean's yard, Westminster, S. W.)—

"No one supposes that the introduction of these or any other schemes will at once, or even in the long run, prove a panacea for all social and economic evils, or solve all the difficulties arising from bad trade and foreign competition. But it may be fairly claimed that by judicious reform we may go far to remedy some of the most glaring defects in our industrial organisation. All classes will feel the benefit of a rise in the level of intelligence and efficiency; the workmen will feel more interest in good work, and will earn better wages in return; the employer will receive better service, and the merchant will find widened markets; the nation will gain in the quality of the commodities which it consumes, and in the increase of intelligence among its citizens. These benefits will doubtless be gradual; for technical education is not a subject which can be suddenly introduced and taught; it must be a growth of time, nor can its improvement in its higher branches proceed faster than the improvements which must take place in the education which is the foundation of the whole."—From Leaflet 1, Series 1, "What is Technical Education?" P. 3.

- (11.) See "*The Wages Question*."—Walker. Ch. 4. "*The Degradation of Labor*."—P. 82.—"The trouble is that these changes which are to set labor right always require time, and often a very long time. There is danger, great danger, that meanwhile men will simply drop down in the industrial and social scale, accept their lot, and adapt themselves to the newly-imposed conditions of life and labour. If this most melancholy result takes place, then, it should be observed, *the restorative changes which have been spoken of need not be effected at all*. All things settle to the new level; industrial society goes on as before, except that there is a lower class of citizens and a lower class of labourers. There is thereafter no virtue at all, no tendency even, in strictly industrial forces or relations to make good that great loss."

Ibid, P. 82.—"The industrial opportunity comes around again, it may be, but it does not find the same man it left; he is no longer capable of rendering the same service; the wages he now receives are perhaps quite as much as he earns."

Ibid, P. 84.—"This image of the degraded labourer is not a fanciful one. There are in England great bodies of population, communities counting scores of thousands, which have come, in just this way, to be pauperized and brutalized; the inhabitants weakened and diseased by underfeeding and

foul air until, in the second generation, blindness, lameness, and scrofula become abnormally prevalent; hopeless and lost to all self-respect so that they can scarcely be said to desire a better condition, for they know no better; and still bringing children into the world to fill their miserable places in garrets and cellars, and in time, in the wards of the workhouse."

Ibid, P. 86.—"It is when the reduction begins to affect the power of the workman to maintain himself, according to the standard of decency which he has set for himself, that the decline in industrial quality goes on most rapidly. The fact that he is driven to squalid conditions does not merely lower his physical tone; almost inevitably it impairs his sense of self-respect and social ambition, that sense which it is so difficult to awaken, so fatally easy to destroy."

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- (12.) "English villages may be roughly divided into two classes. There are the 'open' villages, where land and cottages belong to a variety of owners; and there are others which are owned entirely, or almost entirely, by *single* landlords. Both kinds of ownership have certain advantages and certain disadvantages. Where the entire village belongs to a single bad landlord, the ownership of one man is obviously the worst conceivable system. But if the single landlord be a good one, the advantages from a sanitary, educational, and housing point of view are often equally obvious, and leave frequently little to be desired in these respects. The landlord has paid perhaps for the whole of a complete and effective system of drainage, he has built the school and subscribed largely to it, he has pulled down many bad cottages and built thoroughly healthy ones, he provides allotments for all who wish to have them. Yet there is one important disadvantage in this kind of village. There is a tendency at work which lessens the self-reliance and the independence of the people, and prevents them from learning to shift for themselves. 'We cannot marry unless the bailiff gives us leave,' is a complaint not uncommonly heard in these villages, and though perhaps not strictly true, it indicates a feeling that a man cannot get a cottage without first submitting his claim and his past conduct to the landlord's representative. The same is true of schools, reading-rooms, clothing clubs, and similar institutions, so far as they are provided and controlled to a great extent by others than the labourers themselves. A practical farmer of long experience in the neighbourhood of which I have spoken, says on this subject: 'Landlords, I think, like to keep their villages in their own hands, no doubt with the best motives. But grandmotherly government does not develop the best labourers. Two-handed ready helpful fellows are mostly men of some independence;' and he is further of opinion that the 'open' villages have produced more vigorous promising material among the labourers than the villages belonging all to one landlord, 'The two-handed men,' the 'vigorous promising material' are what we need in our villages now more than ever before."—From "*Land, Labourers, and Association*"—*Contemporary Review*, July, 1886.

- (13.) There can be little doubt that sooner or later much fuller powers in this direction will be given subject to the sanction of County Councils or district councils.
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- (14.) The day after the overthrow of Louis Phillipe, in 1848, the Provisional Government of France issued the following decree :—

“ The Provisional Government undertake to guarantee a livelihood for the working classes. They engage to guarantee work for all the citizens. They recognise that the workers must associate amongst themselves so as to enjoy the rightful recompense of their labours.”

To carry this decree into effect they constituted a Permanent Commission to meet in the Palace of the Luxembourg, under the presidency of Louis Blanc.

Two sets of state-aided enterprises were the result of this commission. (1.) The famous “ National Workshops.” (2.) “ Co-operative Societies.”

Under the first of these schemes, workshops, factories, &c., were to be bought by the State, the workers being associated together for their conduct. The profits were to be divided into four parts, three to be devoted to repayment of the Government, a fund for the old and infirm and a reserve fund respectively, and the fourth to be divided among the workers. Prices were to be fixed by the State.

The project was entrusted to M. Emile Thomas, and was a disastrous failure. Louis Blanc repudiates it in his “ History of the Revolution of 1848.” “ These famous National Workshops in connection with which I have run the risk of being assassinated in Paris in broad daylight, in the open Boulevard, were neither my work nor even an indirect application of my doctrines, but the exclusive work of my enemies in the bosom of the Provisional Government,” (vol. ii., p. 274). Be this as it may the failure of the workshops was a final blow to Louis Blanc’s influence.

The second scheme, was that of Co-operative Societies aided by State subsidy. It may be interesting to quote the provisional rules drawn up for the constitution of one of these Societies :—

- (1.) “ The operative mechanics of the workshop of Derome and Cail, form themselves into an association based on this principle, adopted up to the present time, that if it should happen that the amount of work to be done were not in proportion to the number of workers, it should be divided up so that none of them should be deprived of work, that is of bread.

The workers themselves will determine which of the following systems it is convenient to choose: whether equal division both of wages and profits, or equal division of profits only.

(2.) The total sum of wages actually paid to the operative mechanics will not alter ; but the employer undertakes to add to it, under the form of profits, an eleventh of the price of the goods calculated on the mean of the price of each piece from the beginning of the order up to date, always supposing that this is possible ; which will be examined by the commissioner appointed for this purpose, to whom will be added a commission nominated by the workers and an engineer.

(3.) The commissioner, the commission nominated by the workers and the engineer, will be especially entrusted with the task of laying the foundation of a permanent system to be adopted, setting out from this principle, that it is of the highest importance to emerge from the provisional stage as soon as possible.

M. Vidalis is nominated commissioner for the purposes above defined on the suggestion of the workers present.

25th March, 1848.

CH. DEROME & CAIL, DREVET, LALOYE, COLLIN,
Mayor of the 1st Arrondissement.

A. DURAND SAINT AMAND.

Approved—LOUIS BLANC,

Member of the Provisional Government, President of the Government Commission for the workers.

(From Louis Blanc's "History of the Revolution of 1848," Vol. ii., p. 305, &c.

A State subsidy of 3,000,000 francs was voted on the fifth of July to aid these Societies, more in order to appease popular discontent, than as a well directed attempt to develop co-operation. Some of Louis Blanc's schemes seem to have been very foolishly devised. He brought together 1800 tailors in the cells of the debtors' prison of Clichy given for that purpose by government, and set them to work to make uniforms for the national guard. They worked on until the time of the June barricades, after which hardly any put in an appearance ; the contract could not be kept and was cancelled by the Government. Fifty out of the 1800 tailors then formed themselves into a regular co-operative Society which lasted for some time.

The vote of 3000,000 francs was allotted by a council of fifteen, who distributed it on the most mysterious principles. "The aid given to genuine Co-operative Societies by the government was very slight. . . . It is impossible to discover on what principle of allocation the council acted, Whip makers, and porcelain painters were successful, carpenters, masons, hat makers, and other useful folk went away empty handed. One Parisian Association alone got a vote of 200,000 francs (£8000). It was a firm of shawl makers in which eighteen persons were concerned. In the Provinces not more than 50,000 of 1,700,000 francs appear to have found its way to Workmen's Societies." (Mr. Vaughan Nash. "Co-operation under the French Republic, 1848.")

These subsidised Societies collapsed within six months, 18 more failed in 1851 on the advent of Louis Napoleon, 12 more failed in 1852, only four remained in 1865, and by 1875 only one (the file cutters) survived.

Mr. Nash concludes that "the 1848 experiment does at least show two things—the practical difficulties that lie in the way of State Grants, and the danger of putting the labour movement up to auction in the political market."

(15) The following is a copy of the clauses of the only Eight Hours' Bill that is at present before the House of Commons.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Miners' (Hours of Work) Act 1889.
 - (2) A person shall not in any one day of twenty-four hours, be employed underground in any mine for a period exceeding eight hours from the time of his leaving the surface of the ground to the time of his ascent thereto, except in case of accident or other emergency.
 - (3) Any employer or the agent of any employer, employing or permitting to be employed, any person in contravention of this enactment, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings for each offence, to be recovered in the same manner in which any penalty under the Acts relating to factories and workshops is recoverable.
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(16.) Walker's "Wages Question," ch. xxii., p. 303, &c. Walker enumerates four causes which may place the labourer at a disadvantage. (i.) Laws which act in restraint of movement or contract [*e. g.*, Statute of Labourers, 1350, and the Law of Settlement (Charles II.), of which Walker says—"It is doubtful if all the barbarous enactments we have cited are together responsible for more of the present pauperism and destitution of England than is the law of parochial settlement" (p. 308)] ; (ii.) a fictitious currency; (iii.) the incidence of taxation; (iv.) injudicious poor-laws. P. 319.—"Let us go back at once to the elementary question—Why does the labourer work? Clearly that he may eat. If he may eat without it, he will not work. Simple and obvious; yet the neglect or contempt of this truth by the English Parliament between 1767 and 1832, brought the working classes to the verge of ruin, created a vast body of pauperism which has become hereditary, and engendered vices in the whole labour system of the Kingdom which work their evil work to this day."

"When that very painful chapter which deals with the period 1760–1850 comes to be written, one thing at least will be clear. This period, which marks the reign of industrial anarchy, is also the period of the growth of the proletariat. The mass of half-starved misery which we call by that name was created by the uncertainty of the modern labour market. The very same industrial changes which raised the wages of those

who could secure employment, made the position of the majority more precarious and their prospects more indefinite. Thus, while wealth increased rapidly, population and destitution advanced with almost equal strides. This is the real explanation of the observed connection of Progress and Poverty." Professor Foxwell, "*Irregularity of Employment and Fluctuations of Prices.*"

"We know of no truer charity than to look into the necessity for, and the administration of, the Charities, and to protect the benevolent from the mischief of indiscriminate charitable Out-door Relief, which is quite as bad as indiscriminate Poor-Law Out-door Relief. The Public Authorities also require to be looked after, to see that they avail themselves of all the legal provisions for the benefit of the poor, and thus clear the way for Charity to deal only with its proper objects. A propaganda for Charity Reform should willingly submit to the necessary unpopularity, that it might do the incalculable service of getting the benevolent public to administer its charity in the wisest way, for the relief of the suffering population whom it now vainly strives to reach."—From "*Occasional Paper*," No. 2, of the Charity Organisation Society. (Buckingham Street, Strand.)

- (17) There were one or two amendments proposed to the Local Government (England) Bill before the Licensing Clauses were dropped, which if carried would have ensured the final settlement of the compensation question within a short time. Such was that of Mr. Theodore Fry to insert as a sub-section "No holder of a licence shall be entitled to any compensation whatever after the expiration of eight years from the passing of this Act:" or another to the effect that compensation should diminish by one tenth for each year for ten years, so that after the expiration of ten years no compensation should be given.
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- (18) Partly owing to the unsuitable conditions laid down by the Education Department for Evening Schools the attendance diminished from 49,868 in 1876 to 26,089 in 1886. (See leaflet of National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education, Series III. No 4. "*The Need for Evening Schools.*") "Unless compulsion is called in, the permanent success of evening schools must depend upon their attractiveness. A vast number of boys and girls are to be found to-day in our streets in the evenings contracting evil habits, wasting valuable time, and wasting the money paid for their earlier education by their parents, the ratepayers, and the taxpaying public, who might easily be attracted into schools which offered a varied and attractive programme of instruction, combined, perhaps, with opportunities for innocent recreation."
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- (19) Since this speech was delivered, the Government have assented to the second reading of Sir Henry Roscoe's Bill for the provision of Technical

Education, and to the second reading of Mr. Stuart Rendel's Bill for providing Intermediate Education in Wales. The future progress of these measures will be watched with great interest, and they may be the starting point for very important educational advance.

- (20) Much fuller information than we yet have is needed as to various industrial movements, and the course and duration of strikes and lock-outs, and the Statistical departments of the various government offices should be co-ordinated under the superintendence of a responsible official. At present such is the want of connection among them that much of the value of the statistical returns published by the government is often lost.





